

# *Credit, and Belief*

As students often ask about extra credit, I'll echo some thoughts at year's midpoint. Throughout the year, I'm always happy to grant extra credit, as long as we appreciate and agree upon the value of the term, the process it involves. We've noted from the start that the word *credit* has its roots in the word *credere* (to believe). Remember the religious associations we noted with a *credo* ("I believe"). And remember how we re-defined a "credit" card not as a piece of plastic or money itself, but an agreement of *belief*; the bank believes that you will ultimately pay back the money you've temporarily borrowed from them for the transaction.

**In short, think of credit as belief.**

Now, particularly in light of our discussions about the habits of good academic citizenship, what would it mean to earn extra *credit*, extra *belief*? Think about it this way: if you do something that seems of value to your work in this course, then find a way to explain what it is you've done, and why you think that might have value. In other words, do you yourself *believe/credit* the merits of the work or activity that you've chosen to take on? And can you find a way to help me believe, in turn, in its merits? I'm generally an easy sell on such matters, once I hear you express that belief in the process and the payoff in your own words.

## **Some good extra credit activities to build your cultural awareness as young citizens:**

**Locally, or on holiday travels**, attend a **performance of a theatrical play or musical**

(consider *A Christmas Carol* opening in Dec. at the theater we went to in Staunton, or shows in other cities)

**Enjoy a concert or dance show** (could be classical, or contemporary; just be prepared to discuss its style)

**Tour a Museum Exhibit** (Describe artists or artistic styles? What cultural histories connect to our studies?)

**Explore a cultural or seasonal festival** (arts/cultural heritage festivals: what arts/traditions do you see?)

*Be creative in your Cultural Curiosity!*

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With holiday breaks ahead, & our work with Shakespeare this winter, you can also

**VIEW & REVIEW one of the Shakespeare films on back:**

For credit, write a **2 PARAGRAPH REVIEW** noting your responses to the film:

- 1) What happens in the PLOT? Describe some CHARACTERS, important THEMES.
- 2) What did you like/dislike in the film? WHY? Describe its STYLE.

Whether Shakespeare or otherwise, write a reflective **2 PARAGRAPH RESPONSE (ca. 200 words)** in order to both credit your efforts, and to credit the arts and culture you have engaged.

In those two parags, explain what you saw/did, including several sentences describing what you got out of it.

What felt new or familiar? What did it add to your understanding or appreciation?

What did you like or not like about (a *credo* does not necessarily mean being a fan of something)?

How might this help you in your study of English?

## ***Shakespeare Films worth CREDITING***

**As You Like It:** *Love and Laughter, Forests, Courts and a Wise Fool* (dir. Kenneth Branagh, 2006, PG): Rosalind, the daughter of the banished Duke Senior, is raised at the court of Duke Frederick (the younger brother who steals the dukedom), with her cousin Celia (daughter to Duke Frederick). She falls in love with a young man named Orlando, but before she can even think twice about it, she is banished by Duke Frederick, who threatens death if she comes near the court again. Celia, being Rosalind's best friend, goes with Rosalind (who is disguised as a boy, Ganymede) and Touchstone, the court's fool, to the forest of Arden. Upon their arrival in the forest, they happen upon Orlando and his manservant, who are fleeing the wrath of Orlando's eldest brother. What follows is an elaborate scheme devised by the cross-dressing Rosalind to find out the verity of Orlando's supposed passion for her, and to further capture his heart, through the witty and mischievous façade of Ganymede.

**Twelfth Night:** *Twins, Mistaken Identities, Love Triangles Shipwrecks & a Fool!!* (dir. Nunn 1996, PG) After being shipwrecked onto the shores of an enemy country, Viola disguises herself as a young man (Cesario) and falls for Orsino, a Count who is lovesick for the Lady Olivia. But as Cesario tries to help Orsino win Olivia's affections, Olivia is smitten with the 'young man' Cesario, leading to all sorts of comic confusions and some of Shakespeare's most impassioned lines about the force of love. Oh, and wait, someone's identical twin shows up and swirls right in! Meanwhile, Olivia's house is full of a debauched Uncle Toby, a foolish dupe, Sir Andrew, and Shakespeare's wisest and most musical fool, Feste, who helps to sort things out with a gorgeous final song to end.

**Love's Labour's Lost:** *1 crazy Spaniard, 4 smitten couples, dance & musical theater* (dir. Branagh, PG): The King of Navarre and his three companions swear a very public oath to study together and to renounce women for three years. Their honour is immediately put to the test by the arrival of the Princess of France and her three lovely companions. It's love at first sight for all concerned followed by the men's highly entertaining but hopeless efforts to disguise their feelings.

**Henry V:** *War, Heroism, and the Most Famous Battlefield Pep Talk Ever* (dir. Branagh, 1989, PG-13) King Henry V of England is insulted by the King of France. As a result, he leads his army into battle against France. Along the way, the young king struggles with the sinking morale of his troops and his own inner doubts. The war culminates at the bloody Battle of Agincourt, still perhaps England's most famous military victory.

**Macbeth:** *Witches, Beheadings, Moving Forests* (dir. Orson Welles: Black & White Classic. 1948, PG) In fog-dripping, barren and sometimes macabre settings, 11th-century Scottish nobleman Macbeth is led by an evil prophecy and his ruthless yet desirable wife to the treasonous act that makes him king. But he does not enjoy his newfound, dearly-won kingship... The play's scenes are moved around, but all the dialogue is Shakespeare's.

**Hamlet:** *The most famous play in Western History, Source for quotations you already recognize: Revenge, Philosophy, a Play within a Play, and the consequences of Revenge and Remembrance* Hamlet returns to Denmark when his father, the King, dies. His mother Gertrude has already married Hamlet's uncle Claudius, the new King. They urge Hamlet to marry his beloved Ophelia. But soon the ghost of Hamlet's father appears and tells Hamlet that he was murdered by Claudius and Gertrude. Hamlet must choose between passive submission and the need for revenge which might lead to tragedy.

(two excellent versions, directed by Mel Gibson, 1990, PG; and Kenneth Branagh, 1996, PG-13)

**2 PARAG REVIEW DUE BY WED. JAN. 3 FOR 1<sup>st</sup> SEM CREDIT.**

WELCOME THE REST OF YEAR FOR 2<sup>ND</sup> SEM CREDIT.